

# CENTRO PRO UNIONE

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## semi-annual Bulletin

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*A Center conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement*

# Director's Desk

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In this issue you will find the up-date of the Bibliography of the International Interchurch Theological Dialogues. You may also find the up-to-date bibliography (in real time) on our web site at all times (<http://www.prounione.urbe.it> click on library and then go to the bibliography of interconfessional dialogues).

In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we are pleased to present the last of the lectures from the **Centro Pro Unione**'s special series on the Eucharist. Prof. Paul De Clerck speaks of the challenges that the third millennium poses to the celebration of the Eucharist. George Tavard's conference, given at the Centro during this year's celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, entitled "Hospitality as Ecumenical Paradigm" is also included. Prof. Tavard is no stranger to the Centro since he has spoken here many times both during the Second Vatican Council as well as afterwards.

The ninth annual Paul Wattson/Lurana White lecture will be given by Gillian Kingston, Methodist member of the International Methodist-Catholic Dialogue from Ireland. More details of the lecture will be forthcoming in the Fall issue of the *Bulletin*.

The ecumenical symposium sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute «Studi Ecumenici» San Bernardino and the **Centro Pro Unione** held at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - Angelicum, Rome, from Dec 1-3, 2005 on the theme of "The Relation between Bishop and the Local Church: Old and New Questions in Ecumenical Perspective" was a big success. The acts will be published in a future issue of *The Jurist* (in English) and in *Studi ecumenici* (in Italian).

Activities of the Centro this year have included courses that were conducted for Caldwell College (USA) on "Faiths Seeking Understanding" and St. Olaf's College of Minnesota (USA) "On Christian Rome." in addition to these groups, we received 37 students and faculty from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey. In addition conferences held this year include "Anglicanism and Eucharistic Ecclesiology" by Dr. Paul Avis from the University of Exeter and "A Contemporary Lutheran View of the Papacy: The Possibility for Ecumenical Advance" by Prof. William Rusch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These texts will be found in the Fall issue.

Our researcher, Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, attended the 40th Anniversary Consultation on the mandate of the Joint Working Group between the Catholic church and WCC in Geneva where she presented a paper: "Towards the Renewal of Ecumenism in the 21st Century: The Contribution of the JWG". Since she is an expert in Pentecostalism, she also attended the Azusa Street Centennial. "Together Again," held in Los Angeles as guest of the International Charismatic Committee.

The Director gave a paper: "Learnings on Apostolicity from the Anglican and Methodist Dialogues" at the University of Durham in honor Walter Cardinal Kasper who received an honorary doctorate. In addition he gave the Runcie Lecture "Constructing Local Theologies. A Challenge for the Future" at the graduation of the Graduate Theological Foundation (GTF). The Centro's Annual Summer course on the ecumenical and interreligious movements is an approved course of the GTF.

This periodical is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Drive, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60606 (<http://www.atla.com>).

James F. Puglisi, sa  
Director





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Centro Conferenze

## Une théologie de l'eucharistie pour le 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire

Prof. Paul De Clerck

Institut Supérieure de Liturgie, Institut catholique de Paris

(Conférence tenue au **Centro Pro Unione**, jeudi, le 14 octobre 2004)

Comment comprendre le propos de cette intervention et de son titre? Faut-il entendre que l'Eucharistie se modifie d'un millénaire à l'autre?

À cette question initiale, il faut apporter deux réponses. La première consiste à bien considérer que le titre de cet article parle non de l'Eucharistie elle-même, mais de sa théologie, c'est-à-dire de ce qu'on en dit, de la manière de la comprendre, en rapport notamment avec les autres dimensions de la foi. À considérer les choses de près, on constate effectivement que les chrétiens des diverses époques ont mis l'accent sur des dimensions différentes du mystère. Il est bon d'en prendre conscience, pour en mesurer à la fois la richesse et la particularité.

Effectivement, et c'est une seconde réponse à la question posée, le deuxième millénaire occidental a connu une évolution spécifique de la théologie eucharistique. En fonction de difficultés que nous exposerons dans la première partie de cet article, les théologiens scolastiques ont déployé de gros efforts pour répondre à ces problèmes; ce faisant, ils ont tout naturellement accentué certains aspects de l'Eucharistie, et en ont laissé d'autres dans l'ombre. La piété populaire, elle aussi, a connu des développements particuliers, que l'Orient chrétien a ignorés, et dont parfois il s'étonne.

Nous venons d'entrer dans un nouveau siècle, qui inaugure un nouveau millénaire. Ce passage constitue pour les théologiens comme un appel à prendre la mesure de la particularité de l'héritage occidental en ce domaine, de ses richesses mais aussi de ses limites. Elles apparaissent d'autant plus vivement quand on les confronte à la théologie eucharistique d'autres Eglises chrétiennes, notamment orientales. Cette contribution revêt donc un caractère œcuménique, particulièrement bien en place dans le *Centro pro Unione*.

On procédera de la manière suivante. Dans un premier temps, on examinera les conditions historiques de la théologie eucharistique commune au deuxième millénaire occidental. Sur cette base, on fera des suggestions en vue d'une théologie eucharistique pour le 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire.

### Les conditions historiques de la théologie eucharistique commune du 2<sup>e</sup> millénaire occidental

Malgré l'étonnement que l'affirmation peut provoquer, on peut reconnaître que les chrétiens des huit premiers siècles n'ont pas éprouvé de difficultés majeures à propos de l'Eucharistie. C'est

une des raisons pour lesquelles celle-ci n'est pas explicitement nommée dans le Symbole des Apôtres ni dans celui de Nicée-Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Les difficultés médiévales

Ceci ne veut pas dire que les Pères n'avaient pas commenté l'Eucharistie ou qu'ils n'avaient pas répondu à des questions de leurs interlocuteurs. Ainsi saint Ambroise avait longuement expliqué comment on pouvait croire que le pain et le vin deviennent le corps et le sang du Christ.

“Tu dis peut-être: ‘C’est mon pain ordinaire’. Mais ce pain est du pain avant les paroles sacramentelles; dès que survient la consécration, le pain se change en la chair du Christ. Prouvons donc ceci. Comment ce qui est du pain peut-il être le corps du Christ? Par quels mots se fait donc la consécration et de qui sont ces paroles? Du Seigneur Jésus. En effet tout le reste qu’on dit avant est dit par le prêtre: on offre à Dieu des louanges, on prie pour le peuple, pour les rois, pour tous les autres. Dès qu’on en vient à réaliser le vénérable sacrement, le prêtre ne se sert plus de ses propres paroles, mais il se sert des paroles du Christ. C’est donc la parole du Christ qui produit ce sacrement.

Quelle parole du Christ? Eh bien, c’est celle par laquelle tout a été fait. Le Seigneur a ordonné, le ciel a été fait. Le Seigneur a ordonné, la terre a été faite. Le Seigneur a ordonné, les mers ont été faites. Le Seigneur a ordonné, toutes les créatures ont été engendrées. Tu vois comme elle est efficace la parole du Christ. Si donc il y a dans la parole du Seigneur Jésus une si grande force que ce qui n’était pas commençait à être, combien est-elle plus efficace pour faire que ce qui était existe et soit changé en autre chose.”<sup>2</sup>

Mais les questions devinrent plus complexes, en Occident, à partir de la réforme carolingienne. Un théologien comme Paschase Radbert, par exemple, abbé de Corbie (790-865), écrit un

<sup>1</sup> On peut éventuellement l'entendre nommée dans l'expression “Je crois...en la communion des saints,” pour autant que cette expression soit comprise au sens des dons sanctifiés, cf. B. BOTTE, “Communion eucharistique et communion des saints,” *Questions liturgiques* 53 (1972) 255-262.

<sup>2</sup> AMBROISE DE MILAN, *Des sacrements* IV, 14-15, éd. B. Botte, Sources chrétiennes, 25bis (Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 1961) 83.

traité sur l'Eucharistie dans lequel il identifie le corps eucharistique du Christ non plus au corps céleste du Ressuscité, comme on le faisait jusque là, mais au corps terrestre de Jésus, né de la Vierge Marie. Voici comment un bon connaisseur présente ces modifications:

“Il faut rappeler que c’est Paschase qui a appliqué à l’eucharistie les expressions ‘vrai corps’ et ‘corps né de la Vierge Marie.’ A l’époque patristique, l’expression ‘vrai corps’ désignait le réalisme de l’incarnation, en opposition à ceux qui considéraient le corps du Christ comme une apparence.’ Après Paschase, le réalisme eucharistique s’exprime de plus en plus en recourant aux catégories théologiques qui décrivent l’incarnation.

Ambroise parle de la *vraie chair* du Christ, née de la Vierge Marie, et dit que le pain eucharistique est *vraiment* sacrement de cette chair; Paschase dit que le sacrement est la *vraie chair* née de Marie.”<sup>3</sup>

Les difficultés rebondirent au 11<sup>e</sup> siècle avec Bérenger de Tours, qui fut enjoint de signer une profession de foi extrêmement réaliste au concile de Rome, en 1059.<sup>4</sup> Ces questions agitèrent les théologiens pendant plus de quatre siècles, jusqu’à ce que les grands scolastiques proposent une solution dont l’explicitation fut facilitée par l’introduction de la philosophie d’Aristote en Occident, à la fin du 12<sup>e</sup> siècle. La solution consista à distinguer en toute réalité de ce monde, donc aussi dans le pain et le vin de l’autel, la *substance* qui en définit la réalité profonde, et les *accidents* (on dira aussi les *espèces*, terme qui fait partie depuis lors du vocabulaire eucharistique commun) sous lesquels les choses nous apparaissent. Ils forgèrent ainsi le concept de *transsubstantiation*, signifiant que, les apparences restant identiques, la réalité elle-même était transformée: de pain et de vin, elle devient corps et sang du Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Pour sa part, la piété des chrétiens de l’époque subit aussi l’effet de ces difficultés et de ces recherches. Focalisée par les questions de l’époque traitées à leur niveau par les théologiens, la dévotion concentre toute son attention sur l’hostie changée en

corps du Christ. La foi en ce mystère s’exprima désormais communément par l’expression ‘présence réelle,’ dans laquelle l’adjectif témoigne de la difficulté éprouvée et de l’insistance mise à y répondre.

## 2. Conséquences de ces recherches théologiques

### L’élévation

Ces difficultés et ces recherches introduisirent une modification notable dans le canon de la messe. Non dans son texte, mais dans sa gestation; une fois les paroles de Jésus à la Cène prononcées sur le pain, les chrétiens de l’époque voulurent ‘voir la présence,’ et demandèrent donc au prêtre d’élever l’hostie; ceci donna lieu à ce qu’on appelle l’*élévation*, entourée bientôt d’une génuflexion avant et après celle-ci; on fit plus tard de même lors de la consécration du vin. Dans la participation des chrétiens à l’Eucharistie, l’ouïe est désormais disqualifiée au profit de la vue, d’autant plus que la liturgie se célébrait à l’époque en latin, langue devenue inconnue des populations. La piété de l’époque se caractérise par ‘le désir de voir l’hostie,’<sup>6</sup> auquel ont correspondu, outre l’élévation elle-même, divers éléments rituels, comme la venue d’acolytes portant des cierges<sup>7</sup> et agitant la clochette, ainsi que le son de la cloche de l’église, signalant à la population locale que la consécration s’était réalisée. “C’est ainsi, résumé Jungmann, que la messe fut axée sur un nouveau centre.”<sup>8</sup>

### La Fête-Dieu

C’est à la même époque que Julienne du Mont-Cornillon, une moniale de Liège, eut une vision qu’elle interpréta comme la volonté divine d’instaurer dans le calendrier liturgique une fête du corps du Christ. Celle-ci fut célébrée pour la première fois à Liège en 1246, le jeudi qui suit le premier dimanche après la Pentecôte. Y assistait notamment Jacques Pantaléon, archidiacre de Troyes, qui devint quelques années plus tard le pape Urbain IV. Il instaura à son tour la fête à Rome, en 1264; il en commanda les textes de l’Office à saint Thomas d’Aquin.<sup>9</sup> Tombée en désuétude à la mort de ce pape, elle fut instaurée définitivement sous Clément V

<sup>3</sup> E. MAZZA, *Continuità e discontinuità. Concezioni medievali dell’eucaristia a confronto con la tradizione dei Padri e della liturgia*, Bibliotheca ‘Ephemerides Liturgicae’ - Subsidia 113 (Rome: Ed. Liturgiche, 2001) 212. Les textes cités sont ceux de PASCHASE RADBERT, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, éd. B. Paulus, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> Denzinger-Hünemann (DH), n° 690.

<sup>5</sup> Le terme *substantia* a été utilisé dès la fin de l’Antiquité chrétienne dans un sens non philosophique, par exemple dans l’homélie *Magnitudo* autrefois attribuée à Eusèbe gallican et aujourd’hui à Fauste de Riez (éd. F. Glorie, Corpus christianorum, 101, p. 196-197). Le premier emploi de *transsubstantiatio* se trouve dans les Sentences du Maître Roland, vers 1140-1145 (éd. Giet, Freiburg, 1891, p. 231), soit avant l’arrivée des traductions d’Aristote en Occident. Sur ceci, voir P.-M. GY, “L’Eucharistie dans la tradition de la prière et de la doctrine,” *La Maison-Dieu (LMD)* 137, 1 (1979) 81-102, ici 92-102; article repris dans *L’Eucharistie. Tradition, célébration, adoration*, Les plus belles études de *La Maison-Dieu*, 1 (Paris: Cerf, 2005) 46-56.

<sup>6</sup> Le livre classique est celui de E. DUMOUTET, *Le désir de voir l’hostie et les origines de la dévotion au Saint Sacrement* (Paris: G. Beauchesne 1926).

<sup>7</sup> Sur ces signes lumineux autour des espèces eucharistiques, lire C. VINCENT, *Fiat lux. Lumière et luminaires dans la vie religieuse du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2004); le cierge allumé au moment de l’élévation se nomme joliment la ‘torche à lever Dieu,’ 236.

<sup>8</sup> J.-A. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la messe romaine* (Paris: Aubier, 1951) t. 1:158.

<sup>9</sup> P.-M. GY, “L’Office du *Corpus Christi*, œuvre de S. Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 64 (1980) 491-507; repris dans Id., *La liturgie dans l’histoire*, Liturgie, 2 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1990) 223-245.

(1305-1314).<sup>10</sup> Elle devint dès lors le flambeau de la foi eucharistique, parvenue à trouver son expression après cinq siècles de difficultés. Le même mouvement donna lieu, au 14<sup>e</sup> siècle, à l'apparition des processions du Saint-Sacrement et à l'adoration eucharistique, emblèmes de la foi eucharistique catholique du deuxième millénaire.<sup>11</sup> De la foi catholique, car les Réformateurs du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle ne ratifièrent pas ces évolutions; ils refusèrent l'expression de transsubstantiation, pour la raison qu'elle n'était pas biblique; c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire! Ils s'opposèrent aussi aux manifestations de la piété qui s'étaient déployées depuis le 13<sup>e</sup> siècle. Quant aux Orientaux, ils ne connurent ni les mêmes difficultés théologiques ni les mêmes développements de la piété, même s'ils partagent la même foi eucharistique que leurs frères d'Occident.

#### *Oubli d'autres dimensions de l'Eucharistie*

L'insistance sur certains aspects de l'Eucharistie entraîna symétriquement la négligence de certains autres. Et d'abord, même si ce n'était pas nouveau, la mise à l'ombre de la participation des fidèles. A l'époque, des jubés séparent le chœur de l'église où les ministres 'disent leur messe,' et la nef où les fidèles peuvent 'prier,' c'est-à-dire faire leurs prières... à l'occasion de la messe.<sup>12</sup> C'est la brisure ecclésiologique entre clercs et laïcs, entre la messe des uns et les prières des autres. Elle est illustrée par de nombreux tableaux où les peintres ont reproduit cet état des choses.<sup>13</sup> La liturgie de la Parole, pour sa part, se réduit à ce que l'on a appelé 'l'avant-messe'; la Parole n'est plus guère entendue; elle est lue en latin, et à voix basse, par le prêtre derrière le jubé. On n'a pas supprimé les lectures des missels, mais le résultat est pratiquement le même.<sup>14</sup> Quant à l'action de grâce, cœur de l'Eucharistie, elle n'est plus considérée depuis la fin de l'Antiquité comme le centre nerveux de l'action, aussi stupéfiant que cela

puisse paraître.<sup>15</sup> Ainsi, un théologien de la classe de Martin Luther en est venu à supprimer la prière eucharistique, mis à part la préface et les *verba testamenti*, sous prétexte qu'elle n'était pas biblique. Enfin la communion des fidèles est tombée en désuétude depuis la fin de l'Antiquité, sous le coup de la réaction des Pères devant des communions apparemment sans conviction de la part de nouveaux chrétiens à peine convertis;<sup>16</sup> Ambroise mettait déjà en garde ses auditeurs contre les pratiques des Grecs qui ne communient plus.<sup>17</sup> Il n'est donc pas étonnant que le 4<sup>e</sup> concile du Latran, que l'on a appelé 'le Vatican II du moyen âge,' stipule que les chrétiens doivent communier 'au moins à Pâques,' prescription devenue le '3<sup>e</sup> commandement de l'Eglise'.

### **3. L'œuvre de Vatican II**

Cette description de la célébration eucharistique médiévale, qui a largement perduré durant les siècles ultérieurs, explique la réaction de Vatican II et le programme de restauration liturgique qu'il a développé. Dès le ch. 1, les principes essentiels de la liturgie sont rappelés; le n° 7 déploie, en réaction à l'évolution médiévale décrite ci-dessus, les diverses modalités de la présence du Christ, 'surtout dans les actions liturgiques.' A la lumière du parcours esquissé ci-dessus, ce rappel de la présence pascale du Ressuscité à l'Eglise et au monde apparaît essentiel; il a été repris ultérieurement par le pape Paul VI dans son encyclique *Mysterium fidei*, qui comporte cette expression lumineuse à propos de la présence du Christ sous les espèces du pain et du vin: "Cette présence, on la nomme 'réelle', non à titre exclusif, comme si les autres présences n'étaient pas 'réelles', mais par excellence, parce qu'elle est substantielle." Cette phrase a été reprise plusieurs fois depuis lors, jusque dans le *Catéchisme de l'Eglise catholique*.<sup>18</sup> Toujours dans le ch. 1 de la Constitution, le n° 14 se présente comme la *magna charta* de la participation active, "demandée par la nature de la liturgie elle-même et qui, en vertu du baptême, est

<sup>10</sup> Sur tout ceci, lire A. HAQUIN, éd., *Fête-Dieu, 1246-1996. Vie de sainte Julienne de Cornillon. Actes du colloque de Liège, 12-14 septembre 1996*, (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut d'études médiévales de l'Université catholique de Louvain, 1999), 2 vol.,

<sup>11</sup> Lire E. BERTAUD, "Dévotion eucharistique," dans *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, t. 4,2, col. 1621-1637; G.J.C. SNOEK, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist. A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> B. CHEDOZEAU, *Chœur clos, chœur ouvert. De l'église médiévale à l'église tridentine (France, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> On pense par exemple à la représentation de l'église dans laquelle Roger Van der Weiden situe son tableau des 7 sacrements (Anvers, Musée des Beaux Arts).

<sup>14</sup> À titre de témoin, on peut apporter le livre de Charles JOURNET, *La Messe. Présence du sacrifice de la Croix* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957). Sur 376, ce futur cardinal en consacre 4 à la liturgie de la Parole, sous le titre: "Le cadre romain actuel du mystère de la messe"; il écrit: "Un portique, l'avant-messe, de nature catéchétique, donne accès à cette liturgie sacrificielle" (303).

<sup>15</sup> "Quant à l'action de grâces, écrit le P. GY, elle est, pour Augustin et ses contemporains, disconnectée complètement de l'eucharistie-nourriture," dans "Eucharistie et 'ecclesia' dans le premier vocabulaire de la liturgie chrétienne," *LMD* 130 (1977) 19-34; repris dans *La liturgie dans l'histoire* (voir note 9), 41-57 (ici 48).

<sup>16</sup> Voir J. QUASTEN, "Mysterium tremendum. Eucharistische Frömmigkeitsauffassungen des vierten Jahrhunderts," dans A. MAYER e.a., éd., *Vom christlichen Mysterium. Gesammelte Arbeiten zum Gedächtnis von Odo Casel* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1951) 66-75.

<sup>17</sup> AMBROISE DE MILAN, *De sacramentis* 5, 25, éd. B. Botte, Sources chrétiennes, 25bis, p. 133.

<sup>18</sup> Encyclique *Mysterium fidei*, 3/9/1965, dans R. KACZYNSKI, *Enchiridion documentorum instaurationis liturgicae* I, (Rome: C.L.V. - Edizioni Liturgiche 1976), n° 436, p. 148; reprise dans l'Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* n° 9 (25/5/1967), ib. n°907, p. 327, dans le *Rituel de l'Eucharistie en dehors de la messe*, n° 6; enfin dans le *Catéchisme de l'Eglise catholique*, n° 1374. Voir B. BÜRKI, "Le Christ dans la liturgie, d'après l'article 7 de la Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* de Vatican II," *Questions liturgiques* 64 (1983) 195-212.

un droit et un devoir pour le peuple chrétien, 'race élue, sacerdoce royal, nation sainte, peuple que Dieu s'est acquis' 'Le n° 41 enfin ne craint pas d'écrire que "la principale manifestation de l'Eglise réside dans la participation plénière et active de tout le saint peuple de Dieu aux mêmes célébrations liturgiques, surtout à la même Eucharistie."

Le chapitre 2, pour sa part, précise point par point les restaurations à apporter à la liturgie eucharistique. Il commence, comme il se doit, par souhaiter que la table de la Parole de Dieu soit apprêtée plus richement: 'on ouvrira plus largement les trésors de la Bible' (n° 51). Les deux numéros suivants concernent l'homélie et la prière universelle, et le n° 54 l'utilisation de la langue du pays, véhicule premier de la participation. Le n° 55 "recommande fortement cette participation plus parfaite à la messe qui consiste pour les fidèles à recevoir, après la communion du prêtre, le corps du Seigneur consacré au cours de ce même sacrifice."<sup>19</sup> Le n° 56 affirme que les deux parties principales de la messe constituent un seul acte de culte, ce qui est une prise de position contre la réduction de la première à une 'avant-messe' La fin de ce chapitre traite de la concélébration, lieu important de l'ecclésiologie de la célébration.

### Une théologie de l'Eucharistie pour le 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire

Il faut commencer par prendre en considération le changement de contexte sociologique, entre les siècles dont nous venons de parler et l'époque actuelle. Cette évolution de l'Eucharistie en Occident s'est développée au sein de ce qu'on appelle la chrétienté, c'est-à-dire le projet d'une société chrétienne où pouvoir civil et religieux ont partie liée, où tous sont considérés comme étant (ou devant être) chrétiens. La chrétienté, en ce sens, est un projet théologique, tel celui de saint Augustin d'instaurer 'la Cité de Dieu' sur la terre; elle correspond également à un état des relations sociales où règne la conviction que 'Tel père, tel fils'; la foi est censée se transmettre de génération en génération. C'est une société où ne règne pas la liberté de conscience mais plutôt le principe de la religion du prince: *cujus regio, eius religio*.<sup>20</sup> Les taux très élevés de baptêmes des petits enfants dépendent de cette manière de concevoir la société; le baptême y joue à la fois le rôle de fête de la naissance et d'entrée dans la vie chrétienne.

Cet état des choses a commencé à se fissurer à partir de la Renaissance, avec une première répercussion dans la Réforme protestante. Le deuxième coup de butoir fut la Révolution

<sup>19</sup> Cette dernière précision, rappelée depuis lors par de nombreux documents, était déjà mentionnée dans l'encyclique *Mediator Dei* de 1947. Mais les habitudes sont tellement invétérées que, près de soixante ans après, elles n'ont guère changé. Très souvent, durant l'Agnus Dei, le prêtre ou une autre personne se rend au tabernacle pour y prendre le ciboire, comme si l'on était surpris par le fait que des chrétiens veuillent communier. Preuve par les gestes que la communion ne sont pas encore bien intégrés dans la célébration, alors que depuis Pie X la communion peut à nouveau être fréquente. C'est un des lieux de la célébration où l'on mesure le poids des déviances médiévales.

<sup>20</sup> Sous cet angle de vue, le document le plus important du concile fut sans conteste la déclaration sur la liberté religieuse, *Dignitatis humanae*.

française et la proclamation des droits de l'homme. Ultérieurement, les assauts se firent plus nombreux; citons encore, parmi d'autres, la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, en 1905 en France, et la fin des États pontificaux avec les Accords du Latran, en 1929.

Ce contexte sociologique a bien évidemment sa répercussion sur la théologie, et même sur l'Eucharistie. Il ne s'agit plus de rêver que 'tout le monde y soit,' ni de la célébrer 'pour rehausser' l'importance d'un événement profane, comme si tous les citoyens du monde partageaient les convictions évangéliques. L'Eucharistie est faite pour des chrétiens. Elle vient en effet en troisième position dans les sacrements de l'Initiation chrétienne; comment pourrait-on comprendre quelque chose du mystère célébré, et surtout y communier, si l'on ne partageait pas un tant soit peu la foi dans le Seigneur Jésus? L'Eucharistie est le trésor de la vie chrétienne; elle n'a pas à être galvaudée, comme si tout le monde y adhéraient avec évidence. Il y aura donc, dans les temps qui viennent, moins de monde dans les églises, du moins dans les pays occidentaux qui connaissent l'évolution sociale brossée ci-dessus. Mais il faut souhaiter que les participants à l'Eucharistie y viennent avec une plus vive conscience, et en ressortent avec des convictions évangéliques plus fortes. Il est bon de se rappeler la formule par laquelle le Père de Lubac a résumé la théologie patristique en ce domaine: "L'Eucharistie fait l'Eglise."<sup>21</sup>

Ce contexte social du troisième millénaire occidental étant brossé à grands traits, on pourrait proposer une théologie de l'Eucharistie pour les chrétiens qui en vivent en développant un triple jeu de don et de contre-don. Qu'entendre par contre-don? Voici comment Louis-Marie Chauvet le présente:

Tout don oblige; il n'est pas de réception de quoi que ce soit *comme don* qui n'entraîne le contre-don d'une reconnaissance, au minimum un 'merci,' ou quelque expression physiologique. C'est dire que la gratuité du don *implique obligatoirement*, de par la structure même de l'échange, *le contre-don d'une réponse*.<sup>22</sup>

Le contre-don est donc la démarche entraînée par la réception du don. Tout don est fait à un sujet, qui manifeste son accueil du don en souhaitant donner en retour. Pas nécessairement par obligation sociale, ce qui ne serait qu'une perversion du processus, mais par l'accueil même du cadeau, par reconnaissance de la personne qui le lui a fait. Le cadeau n'est en effet pas un objet, mais l'expression d'un échange symbolique entre deux personnes, qui se lient, d'une certaine manière, par l'échange de cadeaux. Elles intensifient leur présence l'une à l'autre, comme le suggère splendidement un synonyme français de cadeau, *le présent*. "Les petits cadeaux, dit le proverbe, entretiennent l'amitié."

Sur cette base, on peut présenter l'Eucharistie comme la succession de trois phases de don et de contre-don. A l'invitation du Seigneur à se rassembler répond le contre-don de notre venue,

<sup>21</sup> Sur la force de cet adage et ses limites pastorales, lire H. BLOCK, "L'Eucharistie fait-elle toujours l'Eglise?", *LMD* 223, 3 (2000) 73-92.

<sup>22</sup> Louis-Marie CHAUVET, *Symbole et sacrement. Une relecture sacramentelle de l'existence chrétienne*, Cogitatio fidei, 144 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1987) 113-114.

de notre présence. Au don de sa Parole correspond le contre-don de l'action de grâce. Au don de la communion se rapporte le témoignage que nous pouvons porter dans le monde.

### 1. L'invitation et la venue à l'assemblée

En régime de chrétienté, on suppose que tous les citoyens sont des chrétiens; on les oblige donc à venir à la messe; on y a même joint une sanction: 'sous peine de péché mortel' Or la seule raison de se rendre à l'Eucharistie, c'est d'y être invités. Le Seigneur nous précède. Il nous appelle, chaque dimanche, premier jour de la semaine parce que jour de la Résurrection (Jn 20, 1), à nous rassembler pour entrer plus profondément dans son mystère pascal. On mesure ici à quel point l'instauration de la Fête-Dieu un jeudi, en fidélité à 'l'institution de l'Eucharistie' lors de la dernière Cène, a troublé les repères. Car il ne peut y avoir d'Eucharistie avant Pâques, avant la résurrection du Seigneur. C'est le Ressuscité qui nous invite!

A ce premier don de grâce correspond, si nous y sommes disposés, le contre-don de notre levée, de notre venue, de notre présence à l'assemblée chrétienne. C'est d'ailleurs Lui qui nous accueille; la première parole du prêtre, après le signe de croix, est bien: 'Le Seigneur soit avec vous' L'expression 'Le Seigneur' désigne effectivement le Ressuscité. Par les premiers mots du rituel, celui-ci se présente à nous; il accueille notre contre-don. C'est la présence du Ressuscité.

### 2. La Parole et l'action de grâce

Pris dans la dynamique de l'échange symbolique, on n'en reste pas là (quoiqu'on pourrait savourer un moment cette présence mutuelle). Le Seigneur reprend l'initiative en nous adressant sa Parole, comme on le fait envers des personnes que l'on aime. En ces lectures, il ne s'agit donc pas avant tout d'enseignement, de rappel, moins encore de formation catéchétique; au-delà de ces aspects, qui peuvent exister, mais sont secondaires, il s'agit de nous mettre à l'écoute de Quelqu'un. Écouter sa Parole, la ruminer par le psaume et la savourer dans le silence, Le reconnaître par l'acclamation ('Louange à toi, Seigneur Jésus'). Parmi toutes les fonctions que l'on peut légitimement reconnaître à ce moment de la messe, la plus importante est bien l'annonce kérygmatique: Jésus, Ressuscité, nous adresse la Parole, pour faire de nous ses disciples.<sup>23</sup>

A ce don de Parole correspond le contre-don de l'action de grâce. "Oui, Père, ayant entendu la Parole, nous te rendons grâce pour ton Alliance et ton œuvre d'amour en ce monde, œuvre qui a culminé dans l'envoi de ton Fils, lui qui, la veille de sa passion...et, dans l'Esprit, nous célébrons ici le mystère de sa

mort et de sa résurrection." *Hodie*, s'exclamait O. Casel.<sup>24</sup> C'est en effet un des termes-clé de la liturgie; si elle fait l'anamnèse de l'histoire du salut, c'est pour en dire la réalisation actuelle, et la possibilité de nous inscrire dans ce mouvement salvifique. L'épiclese est bien là, d'ailleurs, pour nous dire que l'Eucharistie n'est pas une manière de nous rapporter fictivement à la Cène d'hier, mais de recevoir le don de Dieu aujourd'hui, en son Esprit. Les Orientaux aiment souligner que l'Eucharistie est une nouvelle Pentecôte.

On peut s'étonner que le sens de l'action de grâce se soit perdu à ce point, chez les chrétiens d'Occident; nous en avons vu les racines ci-dessus, dès Augustin, mais plus encore par l'attention accordée presque exclusivement à la transformation des dons, dès le début du 2<sup>e</sup> millénaire. Or *eucharistia* se traduit par action de grâce! A la décharge des Occidentaux, on peut noter l'accident linguistique qui a fait que le grec *euxaristia* a été traduit en latin par *eucharistia* et en français par Eucharistie, mais que le verbe *euxaristein* n'a pas connu l'équivalent latin *eucharistiare* ni le français *eucharistier*. Le latin utilise la périphrase *gratias agere*, traduite en français par *rendre grâce*. Tout le moyen âge a compris ces mots à partir de l'étymologie fantaisiste d'Isidore de Séville: *eu-xarij*, la bonne grâce. Enfin, un accident typographique a encore augmenté la confusion. La préface étant variable, dans les liturgies occidentales, elle était écrite, dans les manuscrits médiévaux, sur une page de droite; à la page suivante commençait la partie fixe du Canon, avec le *Te igitur*. Les artistes se sont plu à illustrer le T du *Te igitur*, et à le transformer en croix; l'occasion était trop belle.<sup>25</sup> Mais cela a fait en sorte que petit à petit la préface n'a plus été comprise comme faisant partie de la prière eucharistique; le terme préface lui-même, décalque de *praefatio* qui signifie proclamation, a été entendu en son sens banal de début, avant-propos; et au-dessus du *Te igitur* apparaît bientôt la mention *Incipit canon actionis!*

Tout cela fait saisir que la perte du sens de l'action de grâce est profonde, en Occident. Il faudra donc encore de nombreux efforts, théologiques et pastoraux, pour que les chrétiens redeviennent sensibles à l'action de grâce, qu'ils entendent l'appel du président à 'élever le cœur, pour rendre grâce au Seigneur notre Dieu' C'est la tâche du 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire.

### 3. La communion et l'envoi

Dans la dynamique de l'Eucharistie, la communion apparaît comme l'étape ultime, le couronnement. C'est le don total de Dieu, en son Christ, à son Peuple rassemblé. C'est l'intimité la plus intense qui puisse se penser entre Dieu et nous, selon la Parole de Jésus: "Celui qui mange ma chair et boit mon sang

<sup>23</sup> Voir le n° 189 de *LMD*, 1992/1: "Bible et liturgie," surtout les articles de P. BRADSHAW et de H. ALLEN qui détaillent les fonctions de la Parole et des lectionnaires. On trouvera un plaidoyer en ce sens dans R. MESSNER, "La liturgie de la Parole pendant la messe: l'anamnèse du Christ mise en scène," *LMD* 243, 3 (2005) 43-60; repris dans *L'Eucharistie. Tradition, célébration, adoration*, Les plus belles études de *La Maison-Dieu*, 1 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2005) 91-108.

<sup>24</sup> O. CASEL, *Das christliche Kultmysterium* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1960) 97-99 et 173-175; traduit par J. HILD dans *LMD* 65, 1 (1961) 127-132.

<sup>25</sup> Voir J.-P. DEREMBLE, "Lettres performatives: le Sacramentaire de Gellone," dans les *Chroniques d'art sacré* n° 48, 4 (1996) 12-15; P.-M. GY, "La mise en page du Canon de la messe et du bréviaire," dans H.-J. MARTIN et J. VEZIN, dir., *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit* (Paris: Ed. Electre, 1990).

demeure en moi, et moi je demeure en lui” (Jn 6, 56). Don total, sublime, proprement inimaginable. Son appartenance essentielle à l’Eucharistie ne fait aucun doute, puisqu’il s’agit d’un repas, avec une table, du pain et du vin, et que les paroles de Jésus sont limpides: “Prenez et mangez/buvez-en tous.” Malgré cela, comme nous l’avons vu ci-dessus, les chrétiens se sont habitués à ne plus communier, dès la fin de l’Antiquité chrétienne. Et l’immensité du mystère fait comprendre les innombrables exercices de préparation à leurs rares communions que remplissaient les chrétiens pieux du moyen âge, et qu’ils appelaient la communion spirituelle.<sup>26</sup>

Même si aujourd’hui encore de nombreux chrétiens ne la vivent pas ainsi, il faut donc bien comprendre que la communion représente le point culminant de l’Eucharistie, le don total que Dieu nous fait en son Fils. Elle se décline d’ailleurs en plusieurs rites. Elle commence par le Notre Père, prière prononcée en ‘nous,’ une fois de plus; ses premiers mots nous font déjà communier, si l’on peut dire, puisqu’ils nous apprennent à dire ‘nous,’ et que nous nous adressons ensemble à Celui que nous reconnaissons comme notre Père. Suit le geste de paix, où le Christ, comme au soir de Pâques à ses disciples, nous donne sa *shalom* (Jn 20, 19, 21); la recevoir, et la partager à ses voisins et voisines, même si on ne les connaît guère, c’est une deuxième manière de communier. C’est en tout cas une façon de mettre en œuvre l’indissolubilité des deux commandements de l’Evangile; car avant de nous unir au Seigneur Jésus, il nous est demandé de recevoir-donner la paix à nos frères et sœurs. Nous ne serons jamais plus près de Dieu que de nos frères. La séquence se poursuit par la fraction du pain, geste juif de partage sur lequel se greffe la signification nouvelle donnée par Jésus, lorsqu’il y a ajouté la parole: “ce pain rompu, c’est ma chair, livrée pour vous.” On y joint le chant de l’Agnus Dei, confluent de fleuves de signification biblique, puisqu’on y retrouve l’agneau pascal, nourriture de la libération d’Egypte, la préfiguration du Christ souffrant sous les traits du Serviteur souffrant d’Isaïe (ch. 53), et la désignation de Jésus par Jean-Baptiste (Jn 1, 33). Le terme *agneau* est utilisé 28 fois dans l’Apocalypse! Le couronnement de cet ensemble rituel, c’est la manducation du corps et du sang du Christ, où s’accomplit le mystère de notre christi-fication, objectif final de l’Eucharistie. Si l’on a commencé à retrouver la communion à la coupe depuis le dernier concile, il serait nécessaire aujourd’hui de réfléchir aux modalités concrètes de la communion, afin de rehausser la force du rite.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Voir L. de BAZELAIRE, “Communion spirituelle,” *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, t. 2,2, 1953, col. 1294-1300; O. QUENARDEL, *La communion eucharistique dans Le Héraut de l’amour divin de sainte Gertrude d’Helfta*, Monastica, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols – Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Sur les rites de communion, lire P. De CLERCK, “Une mystagogie des rites de communion,” *LMD* 226, 2 (2001) 151-160; repris dans *L’Eucharistie. Tradition, célébration, adoration*, Les plus belles études de *La Maison-Dieu*, 1 (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2005) 175-183. Sur les modalités de la communion et sa proxémique, lire J.-M. SORDET, “Proxemic Signs in the Eucharist,” *Studia Liturgica* 24, 2 (1994) 159-167.

À ce don extraordinaire correspond le contre-don de la vie eucharistique. La messe, en effet, a une fin! Son but n’est pas de s’éterniser; elle est un moment symbolique et rituel de notre vie, destiné à la hausser à une signification sans pareille. Aussi se termine-t-elle par une bénédiction, et un envoi fort: ‘Allez, dans la paix du Christ’ Autant nous avons été conviés par le Seigneur à nous rassembler, pour écouter la Parole, rendre grâce et communier, autant il nous est demandé maintenant de partir et de nous disperser. La parole du prêtre n’est pas de l’ordre du constat (la messe est dite,<sup>28</sup> les portes vont se fermer), mais du programme: ce que nous avons été initiés à faire ici au niveau symbolique, nous sommes envoyés à essayer de le vivre dans le quotidien de l’existence. Car “ce ne sont pas ceux qui disent ‘Seigneur, Seigneur’ qui entreront dans le Royaume de cieus, mais ceux qui font la volonté de mon Père.” Ici aussi, comme pour les pratiques de communion, on souhaiterait une recherche liturgique qui favorise une mise en œuvre plus forte du rite, des modalités qui aident à saisir et à vivre le changement de registre et le passage du rituel à l’existentiel.

### Conclusion

Nous avons aujourd’hui l’énorme avantage d’être informés des aléas de l’histoire, et de pouvoir ainsi mesurer les évolutions de la théologie et des pratiques de l’Eucharistie, de repérer des moments plus forts de tradition et d’autres qui, à nos yeux du moins, paraissent moins puissants. C’est à partir de ce constat que j’ai plaidé pour une théologie eucharistique du 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire, c’est-à-dire pour une revalorisation des diverses dimensions de l’Eucharistie, en la totalité de son sens, depuis l’invitation à s’y rendre jusqu’à l’envoi des participants aux chantiers de la justice et de la paix. A tort ou à raison, je l’ai fait en prenant distance par rapport à la théologie eucharistique du 2<sup>e</sup> millénaire occidental et à son rétrécissement sur les éléments eucharistiques. Cette prise de position s’est appuyée, par ailleurs, sur le formidable renouveau des études bibliques, patristiques et liturgiques, qui ont permis de retrouver l’ampleur de la tradition et l’énorme richesse offerte par les textes de la prière chrétienne. Cet élan a été accrédité par le dernier concile; s’il a énoncé un projet de réforme liturgique, on se rend compte aujourd’hui qu’il faudra encore bien des années avant que le peuple de Dieu l’ait assimilé.

Formons des vœux pour que le prochain synode des évêques catholiques, qui doit se tenir à Rome en octobre 2005, redonne aux chrétiens un goût plus savoureux pour la divine Eucharistie!

<sup>28</sup> Le Missel italien dit (trop?) simplement: ‘La Messa è finita.’





# CC

Centro Conferences

## Hospitality as Ecumenical Paradigm

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Several paradigms have been at work in approaches to the restoration of Christian unity since Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Satis cognitum* (1896), even if the concerned participants have not always been aware of the model that guided their thoughts and actions. What do I mean, in this context, by paradigm? In the epistemology of Thomas Aquinas, the final cause directs all our actions, not the totally final Cause of the universe, identical with God, but the intended purpose in view of which a person acts. In other words, we pursue a dream in everything we do. This makes human life profoundly dynamic. It also puts a burden on everyone, for if we act intelligently we should be able to formulate the aim of our acts. In New Testament terms, we must be ready always to give an account of the hope that is in us. Precisely, hope bears on the future. It leads forward to what lies ahead. It defines the paradigm of one's life.

In the modern context of his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870), John Henry Newman explained that when we act, - and thinking is an act, - we start from an interior 'impression' of what we would like to reach, obtain, or make through our action. What he called the 'illative' sense is precisely 'the power of judging and concluding'<sup>1</sup> that is at work, when, facing a range of possible attitudes, we decide which is the most appropriate at this moment, in the current circumstances. The decision-making that follows the perception of what is appropriate is always guided by a prevision, or a vision, of what ought to be. This mostly unconscious insight includes a more or less vague sense that something is missing or wrong in what actually is, and that this defective situation should be remedied, at least in part, by what we have decided to do. Thus life and thought are carried forward by hope. In Christian wisdom this hope is anchored in God and the promises of God that we know through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, and that we trust through what Calvin called the testimony of the Holy Spirit, present in us.

Cardinal Jan Willebrands opened a similar perspective

in 1970, when, in a sermon at Great St. Mary's in Cambridge, he referred to the notion of *typos* of the Church. He spoke of '*typos* in its sense of general form or character,' and of the existence of a 'plurality of *typoi* within the communion of the one and only Church of Christ.' I quote:

Where there is a long coherent tradition, commanding men's love and loyalty, creating and sustaining a harmonious and organic whole of complementary elements, each of which supports and strengthens the other, you have the reality of a *typos*.<sup>2</sup>

In an ecumenical dialogue the parties try to imagine together what *typos* of the Church will be able to collect the disparate elements that characterize the Churches in dialogue, and to form a consistent and harmonious whole out of them. Several visions of the proper *typos* of the Church, several paradigms, have guided the search for Christian unity so far.

### *The Unionist Paradigm*

In his concern for the unity of Christians Pope Leo XIII did not yet pursue an ecumenical goal. Unionism is a more adequate term for what he wished, the reunion of all Christians under papal leadership. The encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 1896) envisioned Christian reunion as the 'bringing back to the fold,' as he wrote, 'of souls that have strayed' (n.1). Conversion was the model or paradigm of reunion that inspired him. It was not conversion in the profound sense of *metanoia*, though *metanoia* was certainly not excluded. The central concern was reunion with the Catholic Church led by the bishop of Rome. Given the historical views that prevailed in the Catholic hierarchy in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the conversion that Leo XIII envisaged was that of Protestant and Orthodox Christians to the Catholic Church over which he presided as successor of Peter. 'We must investigate,' he wrote, 'not how the Church may possibly be one, but how

<sup>1</sup> John Henry NEWMAN, *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1955):276.

<sup>2</sup> *Information Service*, 11 (1970/III)14.

He, who founded it, willed that it should be one' (n.11). How does Christ will the oneness of the Church? This very good question was then cast in the form of the Counter-Reformation. The resulting model of reunion was the conversion of all non-Catholics to Rome. This was, in the words of Cardinal Willebrands, an 'ecumenism of return.'<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, however, the Church in Europe struggled with the consequences and the influence of the French Revolution. Most Catholic theologians and historians blamed the Reformation for the excesses of the Revolution. As a consequence, the prospect of the conversion of Protestants did not look realistic. And for this reason the Unionism inspired by Leo XIII looked rather to the Orthodox Church, and also to the Church of England for those who perceived its distinctness among the Churches of the Reformation. The hopes of those who looked forward to a reconciliation of Canterbury and Rome were dashed, however, by Leo XIII's apostolic letter, *Apostolicae curae* (September 1896), the arguments of which against the validity of Anglican ordinations remain highly questionable today.

Pope Leo's strictly Roman approach could hardly be shared in other Churches. And when initiatives toward Christian reunion were taken among Protestants and Anglicans, they evidently fit other conceptions of unity. In fact, if one looks for the fundamental impression that inspired the beginning of the ecumenical movement in 1910, and that has kept it going through the ups and downs of always imperfect human relations, one finds a succession of projects, hopes for the future, anticipations of what one would like to see as the Christian unity restored. Taken in its basis and structure, each of these perspectives is inspired by a fundamental impression of what the future ought to be like, and it builds an image of the future that could function as a guiding model or paradigm of reconciliation and restoration.

### 1910

In 1910, when the delegates to the International Missionary Conference of Edinburgh took the first steps toward the reunion of Christians, they understandably followed a missionary concern. The divisions of Christians in the missions bring disunion in the very act of preaching and accepting the Gospel. Hence the need for a joint attempt at restoring unity, or rather for two attempts, one at the level of action (the Life and Work Movement), the other at the level of doctrine (the Faith and Order Movement), which converged into the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. The two movements continue within the

<sup>3</sup> "The Place of Theology in the Ecumenical Movement," in Peter NEUNER and Harald WAGNER, *In Verantwortung für den Glauben. Beiträge zur fundamentaltheologie und Ökumenik* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1992) 257.

WCC, though in practice Faith and Order is somewhat subordinate to Life and Work. On the whole the ecumenical paradigm of the WCC has remained that of 1910: Joint Witness to Christ the Savior, both in action and in doctrine, action and doctrine being inseparable in missionary preaching.

The times had changed since Leo XIII. The Malines Conversations met four times between 1921 and 1926<sup>4</sup> in the period of Faith and Order and of Life and Work; but they were conceived as an exchange of ideas between a few Anglican and a few Catholic historians and theologians, rather than as a meeting of delegates representing their Churches. The Unionism of Leo XIII still prevailed in Pius XI's encyclical, *Mortalium animos* (1928). Of this encyclical Cardinal Willebrands, at the first meeting of the Catholic/Anglican Preparatory Commission said in January 1967: "...it was more a criticism of the ecumenical movement as it then existed than an expression of Pius's attitude toward separated Christians."<sup>5</sup> In fact, Pius XI also, in January 1927, wrote: "For reunion it is above all necessary to know one another and to love one another..."<sup>6</sup>

### *Groupe des Dombes*

There is a certain irony in the fact that a conversion paradigm has been very fruitful in the unofficial dialogue of the *Groupe des Dombes*, which began in 1937, long before the post-conciliar official dialogues with Catholic participation. Conversion, however, was then understood, and still is in the meetings of the group, as *metanoia*, and moreover, *metanoia* envisioned as a collective attitude of whole Churches before God. "That the Churches must convert themselves before their Lord, no one doubts." In 1991 these words introduced a statement entitled, *Pour la conversion des Églises*, "For the Churches' conversion." Already in 1971, commenting on its statement, *Vers une même foi eucharistique*, the Group called for "ecclesial 'metanoia' or 'confessional conversion'"<sup>7</sup> as being nothing less than the recovery of a Church's true identity. Where, however, does a Christian Church find its identity? Only one answer is possible: Ecclesial identity does not exist outside of Christ. It resides in the conversion of members

<sup>4</sup> The Conversations took place January 1921, March 1923, November 1923, and May 1925, with the closing meeting in October 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Alan C. CLARK and Colin DAVEY, *Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue. The Work of the Preparatory Commission* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974) 27.

<sup>6</sup> See G. TAVARD, *Two Centuries of Ecumenism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1960) 120-121.

<sup>7</sup> *Vers une même foi eucharistique?* (Taizé: Presses de Taizé, 1972) 43.

and ministers before and to the Lord. If the focus of the *Groupe des Dombes* on ecclesial and confessional conversion was made possible by the ecumenical initiatives undertaken in Edinburgh in 1910, it carried much further the implications of the search for the restored unity of Christians.

#### *Unitatis redintegratio*

By and large, the Unionism of Leo XIII prevailed among Catholics until Vatican Council II proposed a new ecumenical paradigm in the decree *Unitatis redintegratio*. This paradigm ought to be understood in light of Pope Paul VI's insight into the dialogical life of the Catholic Church. Pope Paul began the encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 1963) with a reflection on the self-awareness of the Church. He posited the principle that the Church's 'real visage, as it shows to our eyes today' in its historical existence, never totally expresses "the absolute and perfect image which Christ wanted the Church, his holy and immaculate Bride, to wear," even though he immediately added that this real visage does by the grace of God "bear the lineaments which its divine Maker impressed on it," and which "the Spirit through the centuries has made more vivid and more significant..." The Church's self-awareness realizes that its own "form... is never beautiful enough, holy and luminous enough to be conform with the divine concept which constitutes its model." In its historical and contemporary imperfection the Church establishes a multiple dialogue with humanity, with itself, and with the other Christian communities with which it is in partial communion. Whence the three parts of *Ecclesiam suam*: (1) The self-awareness of the Church. (2) The urge to renewal that the Church feels. (3) Dialogue as the way to renewal.

Dialogue is precisely the ecumenical paradigm at the heart of the decree *Unitatis redintegratio*. More precisely it is dialogue between Churches *ubi unusquisque par cum pari agat*, 'in which each participant acts with equal parity' (UR. 9). This dialogical ideal has been pursued in the bilateral dialogues that were inspired by the Council, some of them beginning even before the last session, in 1965.

Dialogue remained the central paradigm in the encyclical of John Paul II, *Ut unum sint* (1995). As described in this text, dialogue is more than an exchange of ideas. It begins indeed with a 'cognitive moment (*dia-logos*).' And it also 'by itself includes a global and existential dimension' (n.38), which the encyclical sums up as 'an exchange of gifts.'<sup>8</sup> This expression, 'exchange of gifts,' has had a certain influence on ecumenical thinking since John Paul II used it. It inspired the title of Margaret O'Gara's book, *The*

*Ecumenical Gift Exchange*.<sup>9</sup> It is also echoed in the document that will be presented to the quinquennial meeting of the World Methodist Council (Seoul, July 2006) by the current joint commission of the Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council.

The phrase, however, is not entirely fortunate, for in ordinary life the giver of a gift loses it as it passes into another person's possession. In a true dialogue, on the contrary, ideas, doctrines, convictions, experiences, are not lost to the giver. They are shared as they become an enriching endowment of all the dialogue partners. In fact, the reference that *Ut unum sint* gives to the council's Constitution on the Church, n.13, does not mention an exchange. It speaks of all parts of the Church bringing their *dona* to the common table. The context clearly shows that these *dona* are not gifts made to others, but gifts received from God, which are to be shared with all, not given away or exchanged. Moreover, if indeed one-sided giving often derives from charity, it can also be born, psychologically and even politically, from a position of paternalist superiority. Then the gift should to be rejected. An authentic dialogue, however, is not one-sided. It implies a sharing of talents, mutual self-giving, and mutual reception.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Communio-ecclesiology*

When dialogue is carried out by believers who, even in the disunion of their Churches, are united in Christ by faith and baptism, it promotes feelings of communion. It is particularly significant that the years before and after the start of the twenty-first millennium saw the explosion of an ecclesiology of Communion. In the Catholic Church this took the form of a realization that the fundamental ecclesial model of Vatican Council II was not, as early commentators had thought, an ecclesiology of the People of God. It was an ecclesiology of Communion. "What God wants," Willebrands wrote, "is the unity of communion."<sup>11</sup> *Communio-ecclesiology*, which has long been a theme of Anglican reflections on the Church<sup>12</sup> because it is deeply embedded in the Book of Common Prayer, was in fact so basic to the joint statements of ARCIC-I that the introduction to the *Final Report*, composed in 1981, provides a summary

<sup>9</sup> (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Following Vatican II, the British Council of Churches formulated "Four Principles of Dialogue," which the Lambeth Conference of 1988 endorsed: 1) Dialogue begins when people meet; 2) Dialogue depends on mutual understanding, respect, and trust; 3) Dialogue makes it possible to share in service to the community; 4) Dialogue becomes a medium of authentic witness.

<sup>11</sup> "The Place of Theology..." *In Verantwortung...*, *op. cit.*, 261.

<sup>12</sup> L. S. THORNTON, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, (London : Dacre, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> *Ut unum sint*, n. 28.

description of *koinonia* in an ecumenical perspective: *Koinonia* “signifies a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality” (n.5). Further, “*Koinonia* with one another is entailed by our *koinonia* with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church.” The primacy is “a visible link and focus” of *koinonia*. The Eucharist is its ‘effectual sign.’ The ministry, as *episcopate*, ‘exists only to serve’ it. It needs visible expression as the ‘sacrament of God’s saving work’ (n.7). It is ‘grounded in the word of God preached, believed and obeyed’ (n.8).

The late Jean-Marie Tillard explored the notion of ecclesial Communion at length in major volumes published respectively in 1987, 1992, and 1995.<sup>13</sup> This understanding of the conciliar ecclesiology of communion happily converged with the orientation of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, which, in 1982, after a long process and many debates, made the ideal of *koinonia*, as ‘solidarity in the Body of Christ,’ (BEM, n.21), central to its report, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*, and to the Lima liturgy. Following this, the theme of the Fifth Conference on Faith and Order, meeting in Santiago de Compostella in August 1993, was no other than ‘On the Way to Fuller Koinonia.’<sup>14</sup>

Since ARCIC-I concluded its pioneering work, the ecclesiology of communion has been the object of several ecumenical dialogues, as between Catholics and Pentecostals (*Perspectives on Koinonia*, 1989), Catholics and Anglicans (ARCIC-II: *Church as Communion*, 1990), Disciples and Roman Catholics (1992), Anglicans and the World Methodist Council (1996), Catholics and the World Methodist Council (2001), Catholics and Lutherans in the USA (*The Church as koinonia of salvation. Its Structures and Ministries*, 2005). It will also be featured in the report of Catholics and Methodists that will be presented at the meeting of the World Methodist Council in Seoul in the Summer of this year 2006.

The dominant characteristic of an ecclesiology of communion unites the local and the universal, the local Church being no other than the universal Church in one particular area. It unites structure and sacrament, since the central sacrament of the Gospel is the communion of the faithful with the body and blood of Christ, and ecclesial structures exist in order to organize sacramental communion and give it social visibility. Furthermore, *communio*-ecclesiology opens a large window on the world. As

<sup>13</sup> *Église d'Églises. L'écclésiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1987); *Chair de l'Église, chair du Christ. Aux sources de l'écclésiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1992); *L'Église locale. Ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité* (Paris: Cerf, 1995). For a more recent presentation of Communion-ecclesiology, see Dennis M. DOYLE, *Communion Ecclesiology* (New York: Orbis, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas BEST and Günther GASSMANN, eds. *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, Faith & Order Paper, 166 (Geneva: WCC, 1994).

ARCIC-II declared,

To explore the meaning of communion is not only to speak of the Church but also to address the world at the heart of its deepest need, for human beings long for true community in freedom, justice and peace and for the respect of human dignity (*Church as Communion*, n.3).

The experience of communion within one’s Church calls for communion across all Churches, and all the more so as communion in baptism remains fundamental in the entire Christian landscape, even when it is somewhat impaired where communion in the Eucharist has been discontinued for historical and doctrinal reasons. Baptism, as is manifest in the mystagogical sermons of the Fathers of the Church, implies a radical orientation to communion. Being one in baptism logically entails becoming one in the Eucharistic meal. Paradoxically, this logic has been disturbed by history, so that what is implied in baptism is not always experienced in practice. The knot that ecumenical dialogues must learn to undo is precisely this: How can the Churches together reopen the way to one Communion for all their members? The question brings us back to the mutual self-giving that is at the heart of dialogue, since in the communion of Saints, as traditionally understood, all goods are common to all.

*Koinonia* was a Greek, more specifically Platonic, concept before it entered Christian thought. In Plato’s *Dialogues*, however, the idea became dangerous when it was made into a political principle regulating the organization of the human city.<sup>15</sup> In Plato’s *Republic*, *koinonia* is so basic that it must be enforced by authority. In a similar line Dostoevsky imagined the Grand Inquisitor as a devoted, if fanatic, enforcer of Communion. In the recent past the unanimity of the National-Socialist parades in Nuremberg excluded many citizens. And the political ideal of total conformity came to justify Hitler’s concentration camps and the *shoah*. In these cases communion was the opposite of dialogue. It was a distorted, a false communion.

By contrast, the City of God was described by St. Augustine as a mixed body of saints and sinners. In this mixed body the confession of sins is preliminary to the liturgy. Sins, even of a few, affect the whole; and the whole needs conversion. As *Unitatis redintegratio* unambiguously declared, *De culpīs adversus unitatem valet testimonium S. Joannis*: “*Si dixerimus quoniam non peccavimus, mendacem facimus eum, et verbum ejus non est in nobis*” (1 Jn1:10). There is therefore no true ecumenism without interior conversion (UR. 7). Vatican Council II indeed affirmed that ‘all Catholics must tend to Christian perfec-

<sup>15</sup> This is emphasized in Nicholas SAGORSKY, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins, and the Practice of Communion* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

tion' (UR. 4), a statement that is especially welcome to Methodists, since it concurs with John Wesley's fundamental idea that Christians must seek to reach perfection. This is well formulated in these verses of Charles Wesley:

Partner of Thy perfect nature  
Let me be now in Thee  
A new sinless creature.<sup>16</sup>

None of the faithful, however, whether Catholic or Methodist, can presume to have reached perfection. Communion in a Church of sinners must be constantly qualified by confession; and it should eventually be enriched by conversion. Let me again quote Cardinal Willebrands,

Ecumenism certainly needs theology; but because unity can only be given by God, ecumenism above all needs prayer... Without the mingling of prayer and theological research Christians can never entirely be in the presence of God... Ecumenism will make no progress unless divided Christians have re-created between them ties of 'the heart'. The Church God wants is not just harmony and agreement in the matter of doctrine and dogmas. It is the communion of what Thomas Aquinas called 'living faith,' which is exactly that mingling of intelligence and heart of which I have been speaking.<sup>17</sup>

Now the dimension of Communion that includes mind and heart, intellect and love, is well expressed in the notion and the practice of hospitality.

### Hospitality

Hospitality as ecumenical methodology is the central idea of a small book recently published in Geneva, *Receive One Another: Hospitality in Ecumenical Perspective* (2005).<sup>18</sup> This book was composed by an ecumenical team convened by Diane Kessler, executive secretary of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Without openly saying it, the title itself suggests hospitality as an ecumenical paradigm. I chiefly contributed to chapter 4, entitled, 'A theological exploration;' and I now wish to pursue the theological reflection at greater depth.

The ecumenical dimension of hospitality was first noted, it would seem, in the Anglican context. In his book, *To*

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *John and Charles WESLEY, Selected Writings and Hymns* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981) 325.

<sup>17</sup> "The Place of theology...", *In Verantwortung...*, *op cit.*, 265-266.

<sup>18</sup> (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005).

*Meet and to Greet. Faith with Faith*,<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Cragg saw the Christian mission as turning around two poles, that he called 'embassy' (announcing the Gospel to others) and 'hospitality' (receiving the other so as better to live the Gospel). The Lambeth Conference of 1998 echoed this insight when it incorporated hospitality in its missionary perspective: "This reminds us at once of the dimension of 'hospitality.' Christian faith is a matter of invitation, not force or threat."<sup>20</sup>

Hospitality, however, is not missiological in essence. An outstanding example of pure hospitality was given at Vatican Council II, when John XXIII invited Orthodox and Protestant Churches to send observers to the Council.<sup>21</sup> The observers were housed, fed, and generally taken care of by the Secretariat for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians. They in turn contributed to the ecumenicity of the council by their presence and by their contributions to regular meetings and discussions organized by the Secretariat about the conciliar topics and debates. This example inspired similar invitations that the World Council and many of the Churches have, since that time, sent and accepted. The practice, however, needs a theology if it is to be fully fruitful.

Hospitality is certainly a profoundly religious attitude, which is cultivated in the main religions of the world. It is grounded in the believers' sense of the universal presence of God, or, where there is no doctrine of a personal God, in the all-pervading presence of the Divine. This universal presence is sensed and expressed differently in different cultures. The *Chandogya Upanishad* speaks of a universal presence of the Self, which everyone ultimately is, as a father teaches his son: "That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, Svedaketu, art it."<sup>22</sup> Hinduism is well aware of the ensuing dilemma, when a warrior seems bound to kill others. This is the very topic of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where the dilemma is lifted, though not solved, when Krishna, the divine charioteer, tells Arjuna that, since both death and life are impermanent, the inner imperishable reality 'is not slain when the body is slain.'<sup>23</sup> Therefore no wise person mourns for the dead, and Arjuna should do his duty as a warrior.

<sup>19</sup> (London: Epworth, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Lambeth Conference, 1998. Report, "Called to live and proclaim the Good News," §2.8.

<sup>21</sup> The first case of ecumenical hospitality between the Catholic Church and the WCC seems to have been the presence of five official Catholic observers at the third World Conference of the WCC in New Delhi (19 November to 6 December 1961).

<sup>22</sup> *The Upanishads*, vol.1, (New York: Dover Publications, n.d.) 101.

<sup>23</sup> Winthrop SARGEANT, *The Bhagavad-Gitâ* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984) 105.

In the very different context of the Semitic cultures hospitality is profoundly rooted in the conditions of life in the desert. It is based, more profoundly, on the ties between each creature and God the Creator. As is written in the Koran, "To God belong the East and the West; withersoever you turn, there is the Face of God; God is All-embracing, All-knowing."<sup>24</sup> In Genesis 18, Abraham receives the visit of three mysterious strangers. He welcomes them. The text designates them as *Elohe Yahweh* and *Elohim* in Hebrew, as *o Theos* and *Kyrios* in the Septuagint, as *Dominus* in the Latin Vulgate. That is, the author identifies them with God, even though the divine identity of the visitors is not perceived by Abraham, and still less by Sarah. Indeed, the book of *Leviticus* illustrates a latent conflict between an outgoing concern for all humans, and a fear of legal impurities that can be contracted from others. Even there, however, the hospitality that is enjoined on the People extends beyond ethnicity: the alien (*advena*) who dwells in the Land should be treated like a native (*indigena*), and loved *quasi vosmetipsos*, 'as though he were yourselves' (Lev. 19:34).

In the later history of Israel the totality of gift and response, grace and surrender to *Adonai*, is manifest in the People's fidelity to *haaretz*, the God-given land, which functions for Israel as a model and summary of the universe as God intends it to be. In Genesis 32 Jacob discovers that the stranger he has struggled with all night long is not really a stranger. Although he behaved like a man fighting another man, the stranger was 'God seen face to face' (v.30). Henceforth every stranger in the Land bears the face of God. Even more, God has destined every human being to belong to the Land, and thus to show the face of God. Psalm 87 sings: 'Of Zion it can be said, man after man was born in her' (Ps. 87:5), because, according to a rabbinic interpretation, 'Zion is the source of all human life.'<sup>25</sup> Exemplified in biblical stories, presumably sung in liturgical settings, this is already the principle of catholicity, understood essentially even when formulated geographically.

#### *Christian hospitality*

Passing now to the Christian world, I am convinced that it is not by accident that the icon of the Holy Trinity showing the three angels visiting Abraham and Sarah is traditionally called 'the Hospitality of Abraham.' The icon depicts them as angels, presumably because in the following chapter 19 of Genesis two angels go to the city of

Sodom. The angels are understood as representing the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The ultimate meaning of the biblical episode and of its interpretation in the corresponding icon is that the fundamental relation of the creature to the Creator ought to be a relation of hospitality, the creature welcoming the Three Persons' loving visit, and thankfully receiving all of God's generous gifts. Because God, the Holy Trinity, is magnificent in giving, the creature's reception and response can properly be called 'catholic,' embracing the entire horizon of the divine purpose. And since God does not give Herself partially, a proper, though never adequate response entrusts the whole of one's creatureliness to God.

In this essential sense catholicity qualifies the *Eccllesia* in the letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrniots (VIII, 2): "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Church catholic," which Ignatius also calls "the Church of God the Father and of his beloved Jesus Christ." In 325 the Council of Nicaea acknowledged catholicity as one of the marks of the Church, so central to the Christian community that it was placed in the creed. And there it remains, in the creed that is basic to all Churches and is proclaimed in many of them. Like the Land for its People, the Church of Christ for the Christian believers is commensurate with the entire purpose and design of God for the creatures. Everyone of its members belongs at the same time to God and to all the other faithful. In the context of catholicity this mutual belonging points to what Christian hospitality ought to be.

#### *Tradition as hospitality*

When the Council of Trent, in its fourth session (February 8 to April 8, 1546), discussed the problem raised by the Reformers' advocacy of *Scriptura sola* as the only ultimate authority for the faith, theologians and bishops faced the fact that Catholic theology gives considerable authority to traditions considered as apostolic, deriving from the Apostles. They were aware of the difficulty of distinguishing between truly apostolic original traditions and ecclesiastic traditions that originated after the apostolic times. Nevertheless the Tridentine decree adopted on April 8 upheld the apostolic traditions, which it declared to receive and venerate (*suscipit et veneratur*) *pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia*, 'with equal affection of piety and equal reverence' as Scripture itself.<sup>26</sup> Reception, one can see here, is not a new concept in theology. As the Council of Trent spoke of the reception of apostolic traditions, it assumed that the two notions, tradition and reception, are closely related. The tradition, or traditions (the council made no distinction here between the singular and the plural), need to be received in order to be effective. There is no tradition

<sup>24</sup> Sourat *The Cow*, in A. J. ARBERRY, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955) I:42.

<sup>25</sup> *The Art Scroll Tanach Series: Tehillim*, vol. 2, (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1985) 1086.

<sup>26</sup> See G. TAVARD, *Holy Writ or Holy Church. The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper, 1959) 195-209.

until it is received. Reception ensures that an original doctrine has effectively been transmitted, and has thereby become tradition. This transmission cannot take place unless the members of the Church, and the Church itself, are hospitable to it. The nature and tone of this hospitality are well indicated in the Tridentine formulation: *pari reverentia*, 'with equal reverence,' goes with *pari pietatis affectu*, 'with equal affection of piety,' or 'equal pious love.' The piety of this text does not directly evoke prayer and devotion, as piety was progressively understood in the following centuries. In keeping with the original Latin meaning of *pietas*, it evokes the basic relationship of children to parents and vice versa. The Council of Trent, and therefore the Catholic Church, receive the traditions coming from the apostles because they have been handed on *quasi per manus*, 'as though by hand,' by their fathers in the faith, who were historically and emotionally closer to the revelatory presence of the Word Incarnate, at the time when the Holy Spirit also 'dictated' divine instructions to them.

Hospitality is precisely the attitude of reverence and the affection of piety that characterize the Catholic Church's reception of Scripture and of the apostolic traditions. It is a contribution and witness of the members to the continuity of the Church. It is as such inseparable from the basic ecclesial structure, even when the bishops' or the theologians' attention is drawn to other directions by temporary circumstances.

### *The Principle of Catholicity*

In the diachrony of the Church, reception and hospitality constitute a dimension, an aspect, of catholicity. It is both the teaching of the present by the past, and the welcome of the past by the present. In the synchrony of what the Church is at every moment, reception and hospitality flow from the actual welcoming of all by each, and of each by all. They show forth the reciprocal togetherness of all the baptized, the solidarity among his disciples that Jesus intended when he said: "A second commandment is like the first: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:39). That is, you shall receive your neighbor as you would receive yourself. The prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 placed this love and unity in its Trinitarian context: "As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." True Christian relationships express our reception, welcome, hospitality of the others who share the grace of God and the faith once for all communicated to the saints.

The mutual hospitality of the faithful mirrors the mutual indwelling of the creatures and the Creator. This is hospitality in its deepest Christian sense. When they reflect on the Trinitarian indwelling in their heart, the faithful discover that they are more than themselves, that in charity, if

not in essence, they are also the others whom they welcome as their own selves. Hospitality is properly ecumenical when it is practiced by communities which have discovered that in the design of God they should all be catholic, commensurate with the whole (*kat'olon*, in Greek). As the *Epistle to Diognetus* said of Christians, "every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is a foreign country" (VI,3). The disciples of Christ belong nowhere exclusively, because they belong everywhere.

This Christian hospitality implies a spiritual and moral identification with one's guest. When it placed the common life in a monastery under the sign of unanimity, the *Rule of St. Augustine*<sup>27</sup> borrowed expressions of solidarity from both the Bible and the New Testament: *Ante omnia, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unanimes habitetis in domo, et sit vobis anima una et cor unum*. Which I would translate: "First of all, the purpose for which you are gathered into one is to live in unanimity in the house (Ps. 67,7) and to be of one soul and one heart (Acts 4,2)." From this the *Rule* of St. Benedict went on to draw a practical conclusion: In the monastery, "let all the guests who arrive be received as Christ, for He himself will say: I was a guest and you received me" (*Rule*, ch.53). When the visitor, the other, is received *tamquam Christus*, he or she is seen, one could say, *in persona Christi*, and becomes a divine blessing on the monastery. The monastery, *schola caritatis*, as St. Bernard said, a 'school of love,' is patterned on what the Church is at its deepest, on the Communion of saints, in which everything belongs to all.

Hospitality as welcome of God

There comes a moment in the course of the spiritual life when God's presence in oneself becomes the exclusive center of attention. This is expressed theologically in the doctrine of the 'indwelling of God,' in keeping with the assurance of the Gospel of John: "If someone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our dwelling with him" (Jn 14:23). As John Calvin translated this verse in his commentary on John, printed in 1553, he wrote: *Nous viendrons à lui, et ferons demeure chez lui* ("We will come to him and dwell in his home.") The home I understand to be 'his soul.' "We will dwell in his soul," even though Calvin goes on to explain this with a surprisingly scholastic perspective on created grace: "We will come in the home of the one who loves me; that is, he will sense that the grace of God resides in him, and from day to day he will have new increases of God's gifts."<sup>28</sup> The grace of God, one should add, is in the soul because God, the Giver, is there first of

<sup>27</sup> The *Rule of St. Augustine* was extracted, possibly though not certainly by himself, from Augustine's *Letter 211*, addressed in 397 to a monastery of women (PL 32:958-965).

<sup>28</sup> Jean CALVIN, *Commentaires sur le nouveau testament. Épître aux Romains* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960) 406.

all. There would be no interior testimony of the Holy Spirit, - a belief that is central to Calvin's understanding of the Christian life, - unless, together with the Eternal Word and with God the Father, the Spirit had taken residence in the believer. God is not only the Creator of the universe, in whom faith believes. God is also the interior guest to whom faith attests and whom it trusts. The faithful response to the divine indwelling is spiritual hospitality as its highest.

Admittedly, many of the faithful are only occasionally attuned to the internal Presence. Few sense it as John of the Cross did when, in the last stanza of his poem, *The Living Flame of Love* (composed in 1582-1585), he whispered to his divine beloved:

How gently and lovingly  
you wake in my heart,  
where in secret alone you dwell!  
And in your tasty breathing  
full of good and glory,  
how delicately you fill me with love!

*¡Cuán manso y amoroso  
recuerdas en mi seno,  
donde secretamente solo moras!  
¡Y en tu aspirar sabroso  
de bien y gloria lleno,  
cuán delicadamente me enamoras!*

Even if mystical graces are not given to all of the faithful, all in whatever Church who receive communion with faith practice hospitality toward God in a way that is uniquely characteristic of the Christian faith. The welcoming of divine grace is profoundly inscribed in the doctrine and practice of all the sacraments, whether there are two, or seven, or more. *Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum, etiam ipsum tanquam visibile signum*<sup>29</sup> ("The word comes to the elements and the sacrament is made, itself being like a visible sign"). What Augustine thus wrote should be read at two levels. There is the level of the words pronounced by the minister over a given matter, the scope of which is transformed by the words. And there is the higher level of the Word who is now spoken by the Father over the creature, by Whom the creature becomes properly sacramental, a repository and channel of the divine Presence. The two levels so communicate that in the Eucharist the divine Word is himself received, and the human participants are hospitable to the divine Gift.

Likewise, faith is given by God and received by the faithful. Here again, the Christian attitude is reception. And when the reception of grace is fully conscious and intended, it is truly a gesture of hospitality to God. The life of faith rests on a desire to be as hospitable to God as God is

generous in giving us his very Being. But, as Jesus reminded his questioner, a second commandment is like the first. The first is worship and adoration of God, the Creator, the Absolute. There can be several, even many second commandments, depending on the situation and the needs around us. But one of them is like the first: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' And the young man asked: Who is my neighbor? There is a neighbor in the good Samaritan who takes pity and does a charitable action without expecting a reward, as in the parable. There is also, more fundamentally, a neighbor who gives of self beyond any possibility of adequate response. This is, precisely, God, the Creator, the Absolute, the Holy One. The most basic hospitality that can be offered to that neighbor is our own being, body and soul, as a dwelling place available whenever God wills. When God does come to us in contemplation we then may realize that hospitality to God is the beginning and the end of all creaturely relationships. It is acceptance of God and of the structure that God has given the universe, acceptance of God's sovereign Reality, and of one's fundamental unreality.

I like to think that Pope Paul VI had something like this in mind when, in India in 1963, meeting with members of traditional Indian religions, he quoted a prayer from the Brihadâranyaka Upanishad: "From the unreal lead me to the real; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality" (Brh. 1,3,27). Hindus may identify the unreal with the individual and the personal, the real with the invisible universal Absolute. Paul VI presumably identified the real, the light, and immortality as the Godhead everlastingly alive as Three Persons beyond what human philosophy can conceive as either divinity or personhood. It is not very hard, in any case, to find converging formulations among Christian authors.

God, Thomas Aquinas taught, 'is not in a genus.'<sup>30</sup> Because of this we do not know *quid est*, what God is; and we cannot define God,<sup>31</sup> since, in the logic of Aristotle, definition requires a specific difference within a common genus. God, however, can be adored and can be loved. To human eyes, as Martin Luther confessed, after the mystics of the Rhineland, God is *Deus absconditus*, a hidden God, revealed nevertheless in Christ. Luther drew the practical consequence when he affirmed, in a language that was misunderstood by most Catholic theologians at the time, that Justification is not the fruit of what we do. Why not? Simply because our ways are not God's ways. The contingent has no handle on the Absolute, the creature on the Creator. Compared with the sacredness of God we can only regard ourselves as sinful, however holy we might be in the eyes of fellow human beings. Our acceptance with God, our

<sup>29</sup> *In Joannis Evangelium tractatus*, 80, 3: (PL. 35,1840).

<sup>30</sup> *S. Th.*, I q.3, a.5; q.88, a.2, ad 4.

<sup>31</sup> *S. Th.*, I, q.1, a.7, ad 1.



justification, must be God's gracious gift, known to faith alone, and therefore surprising to the merely rational intellect. Our welcome of God is not our doing. It is God's generous and loving gift. By its location at the heart of the Christian faith it determines both how we stand before God, and how we stand before the neighbor.

The Eastern Christian tradition occasionally speaks of the hospitality of God. By this it means, not only that God receives us, is tenderly hospitable to us, but also that God, so to say, yearns for being received by us with welcoming hospitality. I quote a recent Orthodox writer: "In many ways, God's seeking to share God's home with us is not unlike the behavior of a beggar desperately seeking our love. God begs us to join him by loving him and thus one another."<sup>32</sup> Hospitality can become the very paradigm of our relationship with God.

Before we even think about being hospitable to God, God himself has been hospitable to us. The dialogues between Lutherans and Catholics that were inspired by Vatican Council II opened a window on God's hospitality when they led to the Joint Declaration on Justification by Faith, which was signed in the Cathedral of Augsburg, on 30 October 1999, by representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and of the Catholic Church. When we confess that Justification before God does not result from our endeavors or works, however good these may be, but comes from God's gift that is acknowledged in faith, we implicitly pay homage to the graceful hospitality of God, who does not wait for us to be ready, but who takes us in, clothes our nakedness in the merits of his incarnate Son Jesus Christ, and regards us as his beloved sons and daughters. This is of course hospitality at his best and highest. It is well formulated in the Joint Declaration:

Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us for good works.<sup>33</sup>

The hospitality of God, who receives sinners as just without any merit of their own, should be the model of our behavior, both as we individually respond to God in faith, and as we gather in communities for the praise and glory of God. Hospitality should be the Ecumenical Paradigm.

### *Hospitality as Ecumenical Paradigm*

One may well wonder how ecumenical relations would look if they were ordered around hospitality. To the best of my knowledge no one so far has explicitly suggested that

<sup>32</sup> D. KESSLER, ed., *Receive One Another...*, op. cit., 55.

<sup>33</sup> *Joint Declaration*, n.15.

the bilateral commissions between the Catholic Church and other Churches explore the notion of hospitality as applying to their mutual relationships. Nevertheless several documents include pointers in the direction of ecumenical hospitality. When Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey met in Rome on 23 and 24 March 1966, they were conscious of inaugurating a new kind of relationship between their Communion. Their vision for the future specified that Catholics and Anglicans should arrive at a point where they "may be animated by the same sentiments of respect, esteem and fraternal love" that the two prelates felt for each other as they met.<sup>34</sup> Referring to the injunction of Jesus that 'His disciples love another,' they declared

that, with His help, they wish to leave in the hands of the God of mercy all that in the past has been opposed to this precept of charity, and that they make their own the mind of the Apostle which he expressed in these words: 'Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before' (Phil. 3:13-14).

This declaration of 'forgetting' echoed the previous gesture of Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, who, on 7 December 1965, 'committed to oblivion' the excommunications of 1054 between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, thus indicating that a similar path might be open in regard to the anathemas of the Reformation.

Following the joint declaration made by the pope and the archbishop, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Preparatory Commission met three times, from January 1967 to January 1968. The Commission issued a report, - the *Malta Report*, - that could have been epoch-making had all its recommendations been implemented. The Commission listed, not only 'being open to God's guidance,' but also 'being receptive to each other's faith and understanding,' as conditions for reconciliation. The reception of each other that was envisioned required a careful preparation. The Report in fact made a series of remarkable proposals. It recommended first a solemn declaration of the two Churches' common faith. Then it proposed a series of common actions that would bring the Churches closer together in their daily life:

- Theologically: Sorting out 'the differences that are merely apparent and those that are real;' and examining together 'the way we assent to and apprehend dogmatic truths...', especially in regard to 'comprehensiveness'

<sup>34</sup> "The Common Declaration by Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury," in J. W. WITMER & J. Robert WRIGHT, eds., *Called to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, 1966-1983* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference. Office for Publishing and Promotion Services, 1986) 3-4. The Pope and the Archbishop met in the Sistine Chapel on March 23, and at St. Paul Without-the-Walls on March 24.

understood as enriching diversity.

- Practically: Multiplying mutual consultations, joint committees; joint use of churches and buildings; sharing facilities for theological education; collaboration in theological scholarship; engaging in prayer in common; cooperating in liturgical and sacramental updates and initiatives; making joint or parallel statements at international and local levels; keeping in mind and looking forward to the “final stage in our quest for the full, organic unity of our two communions.”

In this program, mutual reception functions as a goal, not as a point of departure, since one can only start from where one is. It is also seen as a developing process, not as a sudden happening. The overall program was conceived as the course of action that was the most likely to bring the Communion together. Had it been implemented, it would have led the Churches through a process of growing ecumenical hospitality. The two Communion indeed came close to implementing it. In a letter to Archbishop Ramsey that is dated 10 June 1968 Cardinal Bea approved the main recommendations, notably the idea of making a common declaration of faith.<sup>35</sup>

In January of 1970 ARCIC-I started to work. In their preface to the *Final Report* of 1981 the co-chairs remarked that *koinonia* was the governing concept of the report, and that it is not a static concept, but rather ‘demands movement forward, perfecting.’ They also noted a convergence in the two communions on the necessity of conversion. Precisely, the implication of the process through which two communions hope to become one is truly a conversion (*metanoia*), from oneself to the other. When they further added, ‘We need to accept its implications,’<sup>36</sup> they implicitly drew attention to the mutual hospitality without reservation or afterthought that full communion requires.

The full ecumenical process can be summed up as follows: It starts from estrangement; it grows into meetings of theologians and of leaders for better mutual understanding; it develops through dialogue; it flourishes in acknowledgment of partial communion and desire for full communion; it engages in a more or less long period of learning and implementing mutual hospitality on the way to full organic reunion.

### Obstacles

I do not wish to sound naive, and therefore I must show that I am aware of the difficulties. Neither the Preparatory

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<sup>35</sup> He judged, however, that a joint use of churches, a sharing of facilities for theological education, and the exchange of students required ‘further investigation’ and ‘consultation with the appropriate authorities: A.C. CLARK and C. DAVEY, eds., *Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue...*, *op. cit.*, 118.

<sup>36</sup> *The Final Report*, 230.

Commission nor ARCIC, or anyone who was engaged in the early bilateral dialogues, ever thought that the ecumenical path would be easy. ARCIC itself issued several ‘clarifications,’ and knew well that these could not satisfy all critics. That the ‘official response’ of the Catholic Church took as much as ten years to be released, and formulated a number of critiques, shows that the Commission had not anticipated all the problems. An ecumenical dialogue, however, is more than a problem-solving exercise. ‘Our declared purpose,’ John Paul II said in reference to the Orthodox Churches, ‘is to re-establish together full unity in legitimate diversity’ (*Ut unum sint*, n.57). The same purpose dominates the relations of the Catholic Church with the Churches and communities of the Reformation. In both directions it presupposes that all sides have at least a working idea of the extent of legitimate diversity in the Communion that they wish to restore. There is, however, no theoretical way to arrive at such an assessment. It has to flow from experience, and for this to happen several types of diversities may have to be tested.

In the Churches of the West at the present time there are unreconciled diversities in the area of structures (regarding the episcopate and the papacy), in the area of liturgy and sacraments (why do we not fully worship together, but only partly in various liturgies of the word?), in the matter of ordination and the appropriate functions of women in the Church. Recent events have multiplied questions in the area of morality according to the Gospel, regarding medical ethics, regarding marriage and procreation, regarding the nature of homosexuality and the proper place of homosexuals in the human community. These questions may seem to add up to a negative score, which challenges, and may possibly outweigh, the positive score of forty years of dialogue. They at least show that the situation between the Churches is not static. And it may well be getting worse at the very time when it gets better. In 1981, at the end of the *Final Report*, ARCIC-I declared: “Some difficulties will not be wholly resolved until a practical initiative has been taken, and our two Churches have lived together more visibly in the one *koinonia*.”<sup>37</sup> Admittedly, this unveiling of the ecumenical horizon failed to reveal some of the preliminary steps that could justify a limited restoration of communion. The chief of these, and the key to others, is the acquisition of a profound sense of mutual hospitality. The separated Christian communities should accept one another as they are before they can reach the point where it is possible and reasonable to mesh their singularities together in a consistent whole. Although it was not immediately practical, the suggestion of ARCIC-I expressed a hope for the Church. Hope is one of the three theological virtues. It also is an eminently therapeutic remedy to dissatisfaction with the present.

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<sup>37</sup> *Authority in the Church*, II, n.33, *Called to Full Unity...*, *op. cit.*, 282.

In conclusion let me express my own hope that after modeling their work on the structures of reciprocity that are essential to an authentic dialogue, after carefully studying together the basis and the structures necessary to a full Christian Communion, the Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the West, as well as the Churches of the East, will commit themselves anew to seeking together how to

receive the others as Christ himself knocking at their door. One may still need to learn how to recognize the hand of Christ who knocks. One always needs to pray for the imagination, the courage, and the strength to open the door to Christ in the persons of his other disciples. Hospitality is now the paradigm that they have to follow toward Christian reconciliation and organic reunion.

# A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INTERCHURCH AND INTERCONFESSIONAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

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## ABBREVIATIONS FOR CONFESSIONAL FAMILIES CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

<p>A ..... Anglican            AC ..... Assyrian Church of the East            AIC ..... African Instituted Churches            B ..... Baptist            CC ..... Chaldean Catholic Church            CEC ..... Conference of European Churches            CCEE . Council of European Episcopal Conferences            CP ..... Constantinople Patriarchate            CPCE Community of Protestant Churches in Europe                  (formerly <i>Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i>)            D ..... Disciples of Christ            DOMBES ..... Groupe des Dombes            E ..... Evangelicals            FC ..... Free Churches            FO ..... Faith and Order            L ..... Lutheran (<i>includes German 'Evangelische'</i>)</p>	<p>M ..... Methodist            MECC ..... Middle East Council of Churches            Mn ..... Mennonite            Mo ..... Moravian            O ..... Eastern Orthodox (<i>Byzantine</i>)            OC ..... Old Catholic (<i>includes Polish National</i>)            OO ..... Oriental Orthodox (<i>Non-Chalcedonian</i>)            Pe ..... Pentecostal            R ..... Reformed            RC ..... Roman Catholic            SA ..... Salvation Army            SDA ..... Seventh-Day Adventist            U ..... United Churches            W ..... Waldensian            WCC ..... World Council of Churches</p>
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## LIST OF DIALOGUES

<p><b>A-B:</b> Anglican-Baptist International Forum  <b>A-D / aus:</b> Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations  <b>A-L:</b> Anglican-Lutheran International Commission  <b>A-L / africa:</b> All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission  <b>A-L / aus:</b> Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia  <b>A-L / can:</b> Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue  <b>A-L / eng-g:</b> Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)                and of the Church of England  <b>A-L / eng-nordic regions:</b> Representatives of the Nordic countries and of                the Church of England  <b>A-L / eur:</b> Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission  <b>A-L / usa:</b> Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA  <b>A-L-R / eng-f:</b> Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the                Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France  <b>A-M:</b> Anglican-Methodist International Commission  <b>A-M / eng:</b> Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain  <b>A-Mo:</b> Anglican-Moravian Conversations  <b>A-Mo / usa:</b> Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA  <b>A-O:</b> Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission  <b>A-O / usa:</b> Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA  <b>A-OC:</b> Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations  <b>A-OC / na:</b> Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group</p>	<p><b>A-OO:</b> Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue  <b>A-OO / copt:</b> Anglican-Coptic Relations  <b>A-R:</b> Anglican-Reformed International Commission  <b>A-RC:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)  <b>A-RC:</b> International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and                Mission (IARCCUM)  <b>A-RC / aus:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia  <b>A-RC / b:</b> Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee  <b>A-RC / br:</b> Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission  <b>A-RC / can:</b> Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission  <b>A-RC / eng:</b> English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee  <b>A-RC / eur:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe  <b>A-RC / f:</b> Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France  <b>A-RC / usa:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA  <b>A-U / aus:</b> Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the                Uniting Church in Australia  <b>AC-CC:</b> Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the                East and the Chaldean Catholic Church  <b>AC-OO / copt:</b> Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the                East and the Coptic Orthodox Church  <b>AC-OO / syr:</b> Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the                East and the Syrian Orthodox Church</p>
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**AC-RC:** Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

**AIC-R:** Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

**B-CPCE / eur:** Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation

**B-L:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue

**B-L / g:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany

**B-L / n:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway

**B-L / sf:** Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland

**B-L / usa:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

**B-M-W / italy:** Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy

**B-Mn:** Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations

**B-O:** Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue

**B-R:** Baptist-Reformed Dialogue

**B-RC:** Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations

**B-RC / f:** Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France

**B-RC / usa (ab):** American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue

**B-RC / usa (sb):** Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue

**CEC-CCEE:** Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences

**D-L / usa:** Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

**D-O / rus:** Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue

**D-R:** Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue

**D-RC:** Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue

**D-U / aus:** Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

**D-U / usa:** Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA

**DOMBES:** Dialogues des Dombes

**E-RC:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission

**E-SDA:** Evangelical-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Dialogue

**FC-O / g:** Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany

**FO:** Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies

**L-M:** International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission

**L-M / n:** Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway

**L-M / s:** Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden

**L-M / sf:** Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland

**L-M / usa:** US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue

**L-Mn / f:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France

**L-Mn / g:** Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)

**L-Mn / usa:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA

**L-Mo / usa:** Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA

**L-O:** Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission

**L-O / g-cp:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate

**L-O / g-rom:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church

**L-O / g-rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church

**L-O / sf:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church

**L-O / sf-rus:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

**L-O / usa:** Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA

**L-O-R / f:** Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France

**L-O-R / na:** Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America

**L-OC / g:** Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany

**L-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church

**L-OO / copt-s:** Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden

**L-OO / india:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India

**L-Pe / sf:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland

**L-Pe-R / f:** Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France

**L-R:** Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission

**L-R / arg:** Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina

**L-R / aus:** Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia

**L-R / can:** Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations

**L-R / f:** Fédération Protestante de France

**L-R / usa:** Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA

**L-R-RC:** Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue

**L-R-RC / f:** Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France

**L-R-SDA / f:** Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France

**L-R-U / eur:** Leuenberg Church Fellowship

**L-RC:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity

**L-RC / arg:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina

**L-RC / aus:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia

**L-RC / br:** National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil

**L-RC / can:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada

**L-RC / g:** Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)

**L-RC / india:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India

**L-RC / jap:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan

**L-RC / n:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway

**L-RC / s:** Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

**L-RC / sf:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland

**L-RC / usa:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

**L-SDA:** Lutheran-Seventh-Day Adventist Consultations

**L-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

**M-O:** Methodist-Orthodox Commission

**M-R:** Methodist-Reformed Dialogue

**M-RC:** Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council

**M-RC / eng:** English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee

**M-RC / usa:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA

**M-SA:** Methodists and Salvation Army in Dialogue

**Mn-R:** Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches

**Mn-RC:** Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue

**O-OC:** Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission

**O-OO:** Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

**O-OO / rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

**O-R:** Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue

**O-R / ch:** Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland

**O-R / na:** Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America

**O-R / rus:** Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church

**O-RC:** Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church

**O-RC / ch:** Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland

**O-RC / f:** Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France

**O-RC / g:** Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany

**O-RC / rom:** Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)

**O-RC / rus:** Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church

**O-RC/rus-g:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference

**O-RC/usa:** North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation

**O-U/aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

**OC-RRC / ch:** Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland

**OC-RC:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations

**OC-RC / ch:** Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland

**OC-RC / g:** Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany

**OC-RC/na:** Joint Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

**OC-RC / nl:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands

**OC-RC / pol:** Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland

**OO-R:** Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue

**OO-RC:** International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

**OO-RC / armenia:** Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission

**OO-RC / copt:** International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church

**OO-RC/eritrea:** Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

**OO-RC / ethiop:** Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

**OO-RC / india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

**OO-RC / syr-india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church

**OO-RC / usa:** Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation

**Pe-R:** Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue

**Pe-RC:** Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue

**R-RC:** Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission

**R-RC / a:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria

**R-RC/b:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium

**R-RC / ch:** Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland

**R-RC / nl:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands

**R-RC/scot:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland

**R-RC / usa:** Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA

**R-SDA:** International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

**RC-SDA:** Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church

**RC-U / aus:** Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia

**RC-U / can:** Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada

**RC-W / italy:** Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy

**RC-WCC:** Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches

**SA-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

**WCC:** World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

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INFORMATION: facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports

REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers

TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

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